

Can Robert Groves Lead a Non-partisan Census After ‘Pledging to Stand Up to Congressional Republicans’?

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WASHINGTON. D.C. – A report released by House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Republican staff examining the Constitutional foundation and history of the U.S. Census concludes that while the latest attempt by the White House to politicize the Census, though not entirely unprecedented, is unlikely to succeed.

“When it comes to the Census, history demonstrates that political gamesmanship has always been the losing proposition,” the report concludes. “Dating from before the founding of the United States through the present, there have been Census debates over everything from Constitutional issues and types of ‘estimation’ to reapportionment. In each and every debate, however, the politics of interference in and manipulation of the Census lose out to independence.”

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The report’s release comes in advance of the scheduled Friday confirmation hearing of Census Director nominee Robert Groves who must explain how his leadership will result in an apolitical count that fully meets all Constitutional requirements. Questions about Groves’ ability to lead the Census Bureau have recently been raised by his decision to single out Congressional Republicans – while excluding Congressional Democrats – for criticism in a May 7, 2009 [Associated Press story](#).

“Court decisions and even our founding fathers have explicitly rejected a Census based on anything other than an apolitical count of the population,” said Rep. Darrell Issa. “This Administration stumbled early on when it attempted to create an unconstitutional chain-of-command for the Census Director. The Census Director must provide assurances that politics will be kept at an appropriate distance away from the Census.”

The report notes that the Decennial Census is a Constitutionally-mandated function of the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government, as delineated in Article I. The Census, according to the Constitution, delegates the Executive Branch and President no role in conducting the Census except for how Congress, “shall by Law direct.”

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The Report Highlights the Following Facts:

- The Census is a constitutional responsibility of the Legislative Branch of government, which has conditionally delegated the conduct of the Census to the Department of Commerce.
- Beginning with the Founding Fathers’ debate over the U.S. Constitution, statistical adjustment, or the use of estimates in determining decennial population counts, has been dismissed as inaccurate, unconstitutional and unhelpful.
- Because political representation in this country, via the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and the makeup of district boundaries, is based upon Census numbers, the results of any and every decennial must be fair, accurate and trustworthy.
- The current administration’s recent attempts to exert political control over the Census were met with historically appropriate resistance and were rejected in favor of the apolitical and independently-acting Census Bureau.

[Click here for a copy of the report.](#)

